

We Remember When ...

ON THE HILL

(These division titles will be
on slides)

BURT

Palm Beach Junior College is 50 years old tonight, and there is no way that 50 years can be summed up in 30 minutes. So all we plan to do in this part of the program is to spin a few yarns remembered by some of the old timers at the college, and hope that you will enjoy them.

WE REMEMBER WHEN Palm Beach Junior College first came into existence on the hill on Gardenia Street in West Palm Beach.

It was September, 1933, and the great depression was in full swing. Teachers at Palm Beach High School got the idea of having post-graduate classes in order to give young people, who had no money for college and no jobs, something constructive to do.

They took their idea to Howell Watkins, principal of the high school, and he took the idea to Joe Youngblood, superintendent of schools -- and all of them took the idea to a meeting of the leaders of the community -- and in October, fifty years ago, classes started in this building, on the hill.

The first classes were taught by seven volunteer, part-time teachers with Howell Watkins, dean of the college, as the first administrator.

In 1934, Dr. John I. Leonard became the first president of the college. His first 14 years were spent on the hill, firmly attached to the high school, gradually winning some pay for his part-time teachers, then a full-time faculty, then recognition from the universities, and finally, accreditation by the Southern Association.

We know there are not too many here tonight who remember when the college

(slides
begin)

(slides end)

(
BURT

was on the hill, but here are two from the very earliest days:

(continues)

Everybody remembers Edna Wilson, the first college secretary, who stayed with the college for 37 of its 50 years.

And here is Marian Morse, who started teaching for the college in 1934, and retired in 1955.

#

(The two ladies will be near the head table by this time, having started forward when Dr. Leonard's photo is shown. Time here to shake hands, lead applause.)

#

Slide

AT THE-BASE *Morrison Field*

BURT

(narrates again) WE REMEMBER WHEN, in 1948, lured by the greener pastures of the recently deactivated air base at Morrison Field, Dr. Leonard moved the college two miles west. And the pastures were, indeed, greener.

Barracks for dorms, swimming pools, mess halls for cafeterias, and even a chapel -- the first, and probably the only chapel the college will ever have.

Some of us here tonight have some very personal memories of the college at the base, and one of them is facing you in this photograph, at the left of the second table. That's Ed Eissey sitting there with that nice head of hair, looking at the book. Ed is proud of this picture. It proves he did something at the college besides play baseball and date the homecoming queen.

BURT

WE REMEMBER WHEN we were at the base, and we remember when we
(continues) lost it. It was 1951, and the Air Force said the base had to be reactivated
for the Korean conflict. The college was about to lose its home,
and things looked pretty grim. No home, no college.

One who remembers that well is here to tell you about it --

Dean Paul J. Glynn

(applause) (Burt sits)

GLYNN
(at floor mike)

(slides)

I REMEMBER WHEN we first heard we were going to lose the air
base. It was like a bomb shell. For a while it looked like one of the
first casualties of the Korean war was going to be Palm Beach Junior
College.

But we started fighting back. Dr. Leonard started talking to
the school board, the mayors and the politicians, and I tried to
rally the troops.

We collected money from teachers and students and anybody else we
could get money from, and paid for a full page ad in the Post-Times.
Then we got the idea of having a parade, and we did it right. We
got permission from everybody to hold the parade, and we made up
signs, and got the band together, and went marching off.

It worked, too. We got some coverage in the papers, and pretty
soon, the community began to swing in behind us.

Finally, the town of Lake Park offered us the use of its town
hall, and the college stayed alive.

I don't suppose we will ever know exactly what it was that
persuaded Lake Park to come to the rescue of the college -- but you
know what I think it was --- it was that parade.

(exit Glynn -- enter BURT leading applause)

AT THE TOWN HALL

(slide

BURT
(slides)

WE REMEMBER WHEN -- a lot of us remember when -- even I remember when the college was in the town hall at Lake Park.

It was a terribly crowded place, and every inch of space was used all the time. But it was a friendly place, and everybody was ready to help you.

Some of you may have the idea that Buddy Reynolds was the reigning star of the stage at Lake Park, but that was not so. The leading man for most of the plays they had in the famous mirror ballroom on the second floor of the town hall was Monte Markham. He was the one who got to make love to all the leading ladies -- and his leading lady was none other than Terry Garrity, who later became famous as the author of "The Sensuous Woman."

Watson Duncan remembers when all this was going on, and he remembers the title of the first of those plays. He says the title might have been an indication of Terry's future -- it was called THE MAN.

Ladies and gentlemen -- here is the romantic lead of the mirror ballroom stage at Lake Park -- Monte Markham.

(Monte to front. Applause. Hand shake..

Burt sits. Monte takes floor mike.)

MONTÉ

(at floor mike)

I REMEMBER WHEN I lived in Palm Beach County, and it still seems like home to me. As many of you know, my folks still live here, and it is always great to see them, but there is more to it than that.

A professional actor must always go to the location where he can best practice his profession. Often that means Hollywood or New York. But it can mean many other parts of the world.

MONTE It has meant many different parts of the world for me, and while
(continues) I enjoy the travel, I also need a place that is truly home. And this
part of Florida is where my roots are. Not only because I grew up
here, but because my professional life began here.

I remember, very clearly, the moment that happened. I was
~~one more student in that crowded Town Hall at Lake Park. I was~~
walking along one day, minding my own business, when suddenly a
hand grabbed my right shoulder with a grip of steel.

I turned around, expecting to find Superman standing there.
Instead, I was confronted by this giant pixie -- or maybe a giant
leprechaun. The pixie, or leprechaun, turned out to be Watson B.
Duncan, III.

"I want you to try out for my play," Duncan said.

To make a long story short, ladies and gentlemen, I did try out...
and before long I was hooked, not only on the profession, but on the
man who introduced me to it.

Here he is now -- the Maestro of the Mirror Ballroom -- Watson B.
Duncan.

(applause - -Monte exits.)

DUNCAN

at head table
mike)

Yes, I REMEMBER WHEN the dynamic and multi-talented Monte
Markham was president of the freshman and sophomore classes, a champion
debater, president of PBJC's Florida Alpha Chapter of Phi Rho Pi,
and an outstanding member of PBJC's Delta Omicron Chapter of Phi
Theta Kappa.

The theatre-drama program at PBJC really began with Monte
when he played the psychopathic killer in "The Man." His lead

DUNCAN performances on the Mirror-Ballroom stage in "Rebecca" in "Death
(continues) Takes a Holiday" and in "The Night of January 16th" were gems.

I remember that 17 years later to the day Monte would do "Death Takes A Holiday" on TV for CBS, playing the part of "Death", the same role he played at PBJC.

I remember when, in 1973, Monte was on Broadway co-starring with Debbie Reynolds in Irene. He was chosen that year by Phi Theta Kappa as the National Distinguished Alumnus at the Phi Theta Kappa National Convention at Houston, Texas.

Monte has a new television show which began on Sept. 19 -- "Break Away" -- an afternoon magazine show with Monte as host.

I would tell you that you can see it on Channel 5 in West Palm Beach, but I have been told that I can't do commercials up here!

I REMEMBER WHEN I recruited Burt Reynolds for the stage. We were preparing to produce the play, "Outward Bound" at the old Mirror Ballroom stage.

Burt had been sitting on the front row of my English Literature Class. He was enthralled with everything from John Milton to Lord Byron. I realized that Burt was the man I wanted to play the leading role of the moody young man in "Outward Bound" -- a role originally played by John Garfield.

After class one day I told Burt that I wanted him to come to the auditions to try out for the play.

"You mean, you want me to ACT?? Up there on the stage??"
Burt said. "No Way."

DUNCAN-
(continues)

But that night, compelled by a mysterious force we now know was fate, he found himself at the auditions.

Burt told me he did not know how to read for a play, but I handed him the script, and told him just to get on up there on the stage and read.

He got one or two words out and I told him that was enough --
he had the part!

Two weeks into rehearsals, I took Burt to one side, and told him I had been following his progress with great interest.

"You are going to be a professional actor!" I told him.

I will never forget the way he looked at me, and then he replied:
"Duncan, you're a fine fellow, but you are crazy as hell!"

Well, you can see how crazy I am -- for this magnetic, charismatic, electrifying actor is a superstar who is the world's # 1 Box Office draw, and has been for the last five years!

I remember when Burt was playing in Outward Bound, and I believe it was on opening night. He had a scene with another actor, who was dressed as a priest -- you know, with the black shirt front and the high collar. It was pretty hot on stage, so we had a fake shirt and collar.

Burt was supposed to be angry with this priest, and he still had all his football muscles intact and his adrenaline was flowing. He reached up and grabbed the shirt and started to pull the man toward him --- and the whole shirt and collar came right off in his hand!

VOICE
(from band stand)

I remember when that happened --- Do you remember that, Burt??

DUNCAN

And here is the actor who was playing the part of the priest that night --- Bob Urquhart!

(continues
after
voice)

(Bob comes up center aisle toward head table.

BURT goes out in front of table to greet him.

Time for a little make-believe ripping
the shirt off, or whatever ---)

BACK TO PLACE WHEN DUNCAN SPEAKS.

DUNCAN

(speaks while

BURT gets back

to table mike.

Bob is exiting)

I remember when that happened, and I will never forget the look of horror on Bob's face when he felt that shirt come off. I fully expected the play to come to a screeching halt, but it did not. Burt sort of pushed the shirt back into place, and went on just as though the breakaway shirt was a part of the play.

At that moment, I knew I wasn't "crazy as hell" like Burt had called me. This man was going to be a professional actor.

I knew it then -- and now everybody knows it.

(exit Duncan)

(slide)

ANOTHER TOWN HALL

BURT

(at head table
mike)

WE REMEMBER WHEN the town of Lake Park wanted its town hall back again, and in 1955 and 1956 the college faced its second life and death struggle. Again it looked like no home -- no college.

BURT

But the county commission came through with a donation of land, the legislature voted \$1,047,000 in building funds, and PBJC got its first permanent home on the shore of Lake Osborne, west of the city of Lake Worth.

Some of us remember that after Lake Park, there was another Town Hall. ~~In the summer of 1956, the college moved into the~~ basement of the town hall at Lake Worth. One who lived through that episode is going to tell us about it now.

Here is Dr. Elisabeth Erling, vice president, and the one person most responsible for this event tonight, and the other events of the Golden Anniversary Year.

(applause)

ERLING

I REMEMBER WHEN, as a young teacher, full of idealism, fresh from the north, and expecting something glamorous in a place named Palm Beach, I first caught sight of that dark and dingy room in the basement. It was quite a shock.

Things seemed a bit brighter when I talked with Dr. Leonard. He could be a very charming man when he wanted to be.

But then he called all the faculty together and started reading a very long, and very dull report called The Chipola Report.

He read for almost two days solid, and had only finished half the report. We were all busy trying to think up things that would keep him from reading the other half.

One of the things we dreamed up was to tell him we all had to learn the Alma Mater, which had just been written by Letha Madge Royce. Now, that song is okay, but our voices were not. And Letha Madge is

(
ERLING
(continues)

is a fine pianist, but the piano was out of tune. I remember it so well I think I can hear it now -----

(music, planned ad lib)

I don't know whether we sounded that bad or not, but it was pretty awful. After two or three afternoons of that, I began to have some serious doubts about this strange place I had gotten myself into!

Then came moving day. All the faculty pitched in to help move the library. All day long we worked. I got so tired I couldn't pick up big stacks of books anymore, so they put me to work dusting and cleaning, and I think that was worse.

Along about 4:30 in the afternoon, who should show up for the first time but our charming president, followed closely by a photographer from the Post-Times. I was about to find out why everybody called him I, John Leonard, instead of John I. Leonard.

(slide)
↓
If you will look at the slide, you may be able to see Dr. Leonard with his arm out, as though directing us to do something. A few minutes later, he picked up two of the stacks of books you see in the foreground --- and a great picture of the president of the college lifting all those heavy books to help us move the library was on page one the next day! Those two stacks of books were -- I swear to you -- the only books he lifted that entire day.

(
ERLING I REMEMBER WEHN that happened. And there are others here who
(continues) remember it, too. Will all the library movers please stand up to
be recognized.

(Lis introduces each to applause)
(They remain standing)

ERLING ~~I have a message to all of you from Dr. Eissey and Dr. Ottis~~
Smith -- you are all going to be needed again next fall when the
PBJC North library moves into its new building! You'll get the same
pay you got last time, and Dr. Eissey promises to show up with a
photographer in the late afternoon, just for old times' sake !

(all sit, Lis exits to applause,)

(
(slide)
BURT
(slides begin)
↓

AT ROOSEVELT

Shortly after the college moved to its first permanent home,
Dr. Leonard retired, and Dr. Harold C. Manor became its second president.
An era of sound development began, with students, faculty, and buildings
increasing every year. The little orphan college was not an orphan
any longer --- and it wasn't little, either.

The campus at Lake Worth began to take on the form of a fully
developed community college campus, and students were being trained
in many ways undreamed of back in 1933.

In the meantime, on 15th street in West Palm Beach, the school
board had started a separate Junior College for black students.
Roosevelt Junior College, housed in this building, reached a
peak enrollment of 300 students, and graduated more than 100 with
Associate in Arts Degrees.

BURT

(continues)
(slides)

In addition, hundreds of other black students got the benefit of some college education and stayed in the community, raising the general level of education of the black population of the county.

Under its first and only president, ^{MR}Dr. Britton G. Sayles, Roosevelt Junior College became an important educational force in the black community before it was merged with Palm Beach Junior College in 1965.

We had hoped that Dr. Sayles could be here tonight as our honored guest, but he was unable to attend. We have asked ^{Mrs. Hissetta Dyson,}~~Dr. Melvin Haynes,~~ ^{a member of our Board of Trustees,}~~Vice President of Student Affairs,~~ to accept a plaque for Dr. Sayles which was prepared for this occasion. Dr. Harold C. Manor, president of PBJC when the two colleges were merged, will make the presentation.

(Burt sits. Dr. Manor comes to floor mike
with ^{Dyson}~~Haynes~~.)

MANOR

^{Mrs. Dyson,}~~Dr. Haynes,~~ I hope that you will tell Dr. Sayles that I feel honored to have been selected to make this presentation. The plaque is a small token of the esteem in which ^HDr. Sayles is held by all of us in the educational fraternity of Palm Beach County, where he worked with honor and dignity throughout a long and distinguished professional life. I read from the plaque:

On the Golden Anniversary of Palm Beach Junior College this plaque has been inscribed to commemorate the respect and admiration of the college for a pioneer in higher education for the black citizens of Palm Beach County -

^{DR}DR. BRITTON G SAYLES

MANOR

First and only president of Roosevelt Junior College
from 1958 until Roosevelt was merged
with Palm Beach Junior College in 1965.

(continuing)

The plaque is signed by the current president of Palm Beach
Junior College, Dr. Edward M. Eissey, and by the chairman of the
Board of Trustees, Dr. Philip O. Lichtblau.

(Burt leads applause. Exit Manor and Dyson)

(Slide)

DR. HAROLD C. MANOR

(BURT

We have already punctured the dignity of I, John Leonard, and now we
are ready to take on Dr. Manor and Dr. Paul Graham, vice president
of academic affairs.

In the late 60's, Palm Beach Junior College was still hanging
on to a dress code that was being challenged in other places, and
was fast disappearing all over the country.

Our first story involves Dr. Graham, when he was in charge of
evening classes, and was on a registration line.

A young Palm Beach socialite with a marvelous name Helene
Fortescue Reynolds -- showed up to register in a deep tan, a jaunty
pair of shorts, and not too much more -- definitely not the usual
apparel for the registration lines of the 60's.

Dr. Graham tried to do his duty in as diplomatic a way as
possible: "Young lady," he said, "We do not come to evening classes
at Palm Beach Junior College dressed the way you are dressed."

"I certainly hope not," she answered. "You would look terrible
dressed like this."

* * * * *

BURT

(continues)

A year or so later, in the spring of 1970, the dress code was almost gone. Students had already begun to wear fun things like jeans and pant suits, short skirts , mini skirts, and even a few short-shorts and mini-minis.

The faculty was pretty much holding the line, but a few, including Lis Erling, had dared to wear pant suits on special days like registration.

But up on the second floor of the administration building, where Dr. Manor and Dr. Graham were in full command, dresses and business suits with skirts of a suitable length were the only acceptable clothing. Everything was dull, dull, dull for Betty Nobis, Betty Childers, Bonnie Griffin and Esther Holt. They were all brave young women, but nobody wanted to be the first to cross that invisible line that had been drawn by Dr. Manor and Dr. Graham.

So one morning, the day before a national women's liberation day, they all crossed the line together.

When Dr. Manor came to work that morning, there was Betty Nobis -- for the first time in her life -- wearing a pant suit to work. Dr. Manor took one look and went down to confer with Dr. Graham, only to discover that the same madness that had overtaken Betty Nobis had also come over Betty Childers.

When he and Dr. Graham found out that Esther Holt and Bonnie Griffin were also in on the conspiracy, both men realized that the jig was up -- their bluff had been called.

One small step for the ladies on the second floor, one giant step for women everywhere !!

(slide)

BURT

(continues)

If you will look over at the screen, you will see that we have not been making up these stories. There are the ladies, resplendent in their pant suits on the very day we have been talking about. We understand Betty Childers is here, back at table 22, and Bonnie Griffin is also here, at table 34.

Stand up, ladies, and take a well-deserved bow.

(applause)

BURT

One more story from this same era. It was some time in the 60's that the public became aware of who the author of The Sensuous Woman was. When the book was written it was signed "J" because Terry didn't want everybody to know who she was. But when things began to ease up a bit, she let everybody know she was the author.

There was a great deal of interest in the press, and some reporters found their way to Watson B. Duncan's office, and were asking questions about his former student. One sweet, young, female reporter inquired innocently of Duncan:

"Mr. Duncan, how did it feel to have the author of The Sensuous Woman studying under you ??"

Duncan stepped back a bit. He looked her up. And he looked her down. Then he gave her that kindly, foxy look and said: "My Goodness, young woman, what an unfortunate choice of prepositions!"

* * * *

DR. EDWARD M. EISSEY

BURT
(continues)
(slides)

In September, 1978, Dr. Manor retired, and the era of Dr. Edward M. Eissey, energetic innovator, began. Dr. Eissey hit the ground running, and has been speeding up ever since.

Registering students in shopping malls, and in the high schools of the county by computer was only a beginning. We added programs like legal assisting, postal technology, and word processing. We took totally new directions like the Institute of Governments, the Women's Center and the Institute of New Dimensions. We added courses by newspaper and television, and started a Weekend College. We got into International/Intercultural education and developed the unique Center for Multi-Cultural Affairs. We got into a millage election -- and won it.

The growth of the college was something to behold -- but you would have to visit Belle Glade, Boca Raton, and Palm Beach Gardens as well as the central campus at Lake Worth to behold it all. Everybody had to be trained to say Palm Beach Junior College Central when they meant the campus at Lake Worth, because Palm Beach Junior College North, South and Glades increased in importance every year.

Soon, it got to be pretty hard to keep up with everything that was going on, even if you were employed by the college.

So Dr. Eissey decided to hold a meeting, twice each year, for all employees of the college from all four campuses. This was just one of many steps he took to keep everybody pulling in the same direction.

BURT

(continues)

(3/1/27)

At the first of these meetings, it was discovered that the only meeting time available was in December after all the students, including those in the musical groups, were already home for the Christmas holidays. So a pick-up male quartet of employees gave their first performance.

They called themselves the Earth Tremors, and explained carefully that you do not spell their last name T R I M M E R S -- you spell it T R E M O R S, because, by the time they finished singing, everybody was going to be all shook up !!

There they are, on the stage at the back of the hall -- the Earth Tremors.

(End program, except for Quartet, who lead directly into Duncan's toast.)